

Honor and Righteousness

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Honor and Righteousness

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This book is dedicated to:

My Lord Jesus Christ

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Honor and Righteousness

What does honor have to do with righteousness? In truth, much in every way, as you will soon discover for yourself. But before we get into discussing the relationship between honor and righteousness I want to first make sure that we are all on the same level, that we all understand *biblical righteousness*. I use the term biblical righteousness because there are many things that have been taught in the church but not everything that has been taught as doctrine over the centuries has been based on the Word of God. In fact, many things that have been taught, and are still being taught in some churches today, are not based on God's Word at all. They are really nothing more than church history and the traditions of men. This has been a common problem throughout the ages — man perverting God's ways into a dead religion instead of a living relationship.

MATTHEW 15:1-8

1 Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying,

2 "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."

3 He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?"

4 "For God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'

5 "But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God"--

6 'then he need not honor his father or mother.' thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.

7 "Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:

8 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.

As you can see from these Scriptures, Jesus had a problem with the religious leaders of His day who were teaching the traditions of men instead of the Word of God. Whatever subject we may study: righteousness, faith, love or any other topic, we

need to make sure that we always go back to God's Word as our foundation.

When you come to understand righteousness from God's perspective it will definitely turn any religious thinking you may have upside down. In fact, it was the understanding of righteousness that brought an end to the Dark Ages and began the Protestant Reformation of the church by Martin Luther. I have found in my own life that the understanding of biblical righteousness has been essential to my Christian walk and I believe that you will find this to be true in your life as well.

Before we begin our study of righteousness, I believe it will help to first establish a basic understanding of the definition of the word "righteousness." Let us look at what the dictionary has to say about the meaning of this word. I have also included the definitions of the words "righteous" and "right" because these are root words contained in the word "righteousness."

Righteousness n. The condition of being righteous; a righteous deed.

Righteous adj. Just equitable; ruled by what is right; blameless; upright, as, a righteous man, a righteous cause. Syn. Godly, pious, guiltless, pure.

Right adj. In accordance with justice and honor, as, he is of right conduct; Syn. Equitable, faultless, fair, true, appropriate, correct.

In Webster's New World Thesaurus I found the following synonyms for the word "righteous."

Righteous, Syn. just, upright, good, honorable, honest, worthy, guiltless, blameless, sinless.

Every one of the synonyms mentioned above perfectly describes many of the characteristics that a "righteous" person would exhibit. Simply put: the word *righteousness* when taken apart means right-ness and it speaks of what is right.

Now many years ago when I first started attending church, it did not take very long before I was introduced to this word *righteousness*. However, every time I heard the word *righteousness*, it sounded a little different, which caused me much confusion. I was not sure what righteousness meant, let alone how it could relate to my life. But in the process of time, I discovered the key that

unlocked the mystery of righteousness for me. And I believe what I have found will help clear up any confusion you may have about this subject.

What I discovered was this: Biblical *righteousness* is a lot like a coin with two sides. In some places in the Bible, the word *righteousness* addresses *who* we are relative to our relationship with God, while in other places, the Bible uses the word *righteousness* to speak of our *character* as it relates to our conduct and actions according to God's set standard.

Recently I heard a minister use the following illustration. He likened the *righteousness* that deals with our legal standing to the root of a tree and the *righteousness* that speaks of our *character* to the fruit on the tree. All Christians receive the *root of righteousness* when we are born again but it may take some time before we begin to see the *fruit of righteousness*. Nevertheless, it must be said that is impossible to have fruit until you first have the root.

Therefore, when studying any Scripture that speaks of righteousness we must first ascertain from the context of the passage which way the word righteousness is being used. Before we go

any further we are going to carefully look at both sides of righteousness because it is vitally important that we clearly understand both sides of righteousness from God's perspective.

Our Legal Right Standing

The first side of righteousness deals with our legal right standing with God. We need the legal righteousness that only Jesus can provide us. Without it we are spiritually destitute and bankrupt, completely unrighteous and naked before a holy God – hopelessly estranged from Him, without any way to personally rectify the sinful nature lodged within our spirit.

ISAIAH 64:6

6 But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

The very moment we acknowledged Jesus as Lord, we were instantly declared absolutely righteous in His sight. This is not because of any righteous act that we did but because of the righteous act that Jesus did on our behalf. Many biblical teachers call this “the great exchange.” That is to say: Jesus bore the penalty of our unrighteous sin nature on

the cross, and in exchange He made it possible for us to receive His righteous nature.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21

21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Once we have received Jesus as Lord, from that moment on, we have been legally declared: just, upright, good, honorable, worthy, guiltless, blameless, sinless and absolutely righteous by God. Our God did this for no other reason than because we chose to be identified with His Son, Jesus, the Christ. I like to think of this legal declaration of *righteousness* as a “state of being in right standing with God.” No longer are we under the judgement of God, neither is there enmity between God and us. In fact, God sees us no differently than He sees Jesus! That is the place of honor that the righteousness of Christ has bestowed upon us.

ISAIAH 54:17

17 No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the

heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is from Me," says the LORD.

I can already hear some of you saying, “If I have been declared all of these things, why don’t I feel more just, upright, good, honorable, worthy, guiltless, blameless, sinless and absolutely righteous?” I can understand this question, having dealt with this dilemma myself.

There are a few things that we should all know about our legal righteousness in Christ. When we understand these things, they will empower us to walk in righteousness with confidence; otherwise we will just be like a wave tossed around in the sea.

First, we must learn to see ourselves the same way that God sees us. This only happens as we renew our minds to the Word of God. Until we renew our mind, we will not enter into our God-given legal rights!

ROMANS 12:2

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Secondly, we need to move beyond a mere understanding of the Word of God to a place where we truly believe what God's Word declares to us. We must come to the place where we become more persuaded and moved by the truths and promises found in God's Word than by the way we feel or by the way our circumstances appear. We must realize and accept that God has chosen – apart from ourselves to freely declare us just, upright, good, honorable, worthy, guiltless, blameless, sinless and absolutely righteous. What I mean by that statement is this: Our legal righteousness (right standing with God) is a free gift from God, purchased by the blood of Jesus, received and maintained by our faith. There is nothing we can do to earn this free gift.

ROMANS 5:17

17 For if by the one man's [Adam's] offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace [favor] and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

There is nothing that we could ever do to earn legal righteousness (right standing) with God. Rather, our part is simply a matter of receiving the righteousness that God has chosen to freely offer

to those who call on the name of the Jesus. Once we have received our legal righteousness by faith, it is ours; we do not have to work for it or earn it. Once we believe this and act on it, then we can abide in the rest of righteousness that God offers to us by faith apart from works. In addition, receiving the gift of legal righteousness by faith completely undermines any prideful attitude that could arise or accompany righteousness by personal works. Therefore, let us honor God with our faith by receiving and abiding in His free gift of righteousness!

ROMANS 10:3

3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness [a free gift apart from good works], and seeking to establish their own righteousness [by their good works], have not submitted to [honored] the righteousness of God [a free gift received by faith].

When it comes to our legal righteousness we have a part and God has a part. We cannot do God's part and He cannot do our part. All too often Christians miss out by trying to do God's part for Him as they go about trying to establish their own righteousness. Instead, we need to let God do the declaring and all we need to do is the receiving.

Thirdly, if we want to walk in the righteousness of Christ with confidence, we need to understand that everything we receive from God, including righteousness, must come by way of our faith, and our faith has nothing to do with our feelings or emotions. Keep in mind that we cannot allow our perspective of legal righteousness with God to be governed by our experiences or feelings. Instead, we have to take a stand on the truth of God's Word until it comes to pass in our life, even if our feelings and emotions all the while run contrary, and many times they will. We must let God's Word be the final authority in our lives.

1 TIMOTHY 6:12

12 Fight the good fight of faith [righteousness], lay hold on eternal life [righteousness], to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

If you intend to stand in your place of righteousness, you need to be determined. Think of standing in righteousness by faith this way: Imagine if you were to draw a circle about ten feet in diameter then stand in the middle of that circle. The circle represents your righteousness. Then imagine that there are five demonically inspired

people standing around you trying to get you to step outside of this circle. Now, you are going to have to be determined to stand your ground if you do not intend to be pushed outside of the circle.

This is the kind of determination it takes to stand in righteousness by faith. There are going to be many contrary circumstances and many well-meaning people surrounding you telling you every reason why you cannot stand in your God-given place of righteousness. Even your own mind, if unrenewed to the Word of God, will fight you the whole way until you either renew it or give up the fight. The only defense any of us have is to build our foundation firmly on the rock of God's Word the final authority. "*...and having done all to stand. Stand therefore...*" (Eph. 6:13-14)

LUKE 6:47-48

47 "Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like:

48 "He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock.

Lastly, comes the biggest hurdle that Christians face when first learning to stand in the legal righteousness of Christ. This hurdle is known as sin. The fact is that sin makes us feel like we are absolutely unrighteous. As Christians when we sin we need to realize that our spirit will be convicted because of the unrighteous act we did. This conviction, if not understood, can pull on our emotions and feelings, tossing us around like a wave in the sea. Yet this conviction in our spirit is designed by God to help us turn away from sin, giving us a new desire in our heart to follow after God in righteousness. Understand that God's purpose for allowing this conviction is to help us so that we will not associate sin with pleasure like the devil would attempt to have you believe.

Unfortunately, many Christians do not understand the purpose of this conviction. Instead of turning away from their sin, they turn away from God. Once we realize that God is not judging us, but actually trying to help us overcome sin, then we will not run *from* Him but run *to* Him. Spiritually speaking, we were declared righteous by God the moment we were born again. But how we deal with sin and the feelings of unrighteousness after we are born again can make or break our success as Christians.

1 JOHN 1:9

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

When we confess our sins, it is not the first time God heard about it. God already knows everything about us – every facet of our lives – yet He is ready to love and forgive us anyway. We all must come to the place where we believe that God cares about us. We must not think that our sin is too big for God to forgive. God cares deeply about you and me. He is not waiting for a chance to club you over the head and tell you what a retched sinner you are. However, that is exactly what the devil does even to those who serve him!

ROMANS 8:33

33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies [declares righteous].

Even though from God's perspective our righteousness in Christ never changes. At times, from our perspective, it may seem as though it does change. Yet we must understand that our perspective will never alter the truth of God's Word which declares that our righteousness in

Christ never changes. Remember, let God's Word be the true, final authority and let our feelings and emotions that run contrary to His Word be counted as a lie.

Think about this: If you are in a place of *right standing* with your earthly father then you should be enjoying *good fellowship* with him. But say you were to sin against him – then you would have *broken fellowship*. Keep in mind that even in a state of *broken fellowship* you never break *relationship*, as your father will always be your father. So it is with our God: once He becomes our Heavenly Father He will always be our Heavenly Father.

ROMANS 8:15-18

15 And so we should not be like cringing, fearful slaves, but we should behave like God's very own children, adopted into the bosom of his family, and calling to him, "Father, Father."

16 For his Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts and tells us that we really are God's children. (TLB)

Remember when it comes to our legal right standing with God, we have a part and God has a part. God's part is already finished. God made it

possible for us to become partakers of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. God made it possible for us to legally walk in the same righteousness that Jesus does. As for our part, all we have to do is receive the righteousness that God has made available to us by faith. It is very important to understand that we cannot do God's part and God cannot do our part. There are many people that have spent their entire lives trying to do God's part, when all the while they only had to freely receive what God had already made available to them through Jesus Christ.

Righteous Character

Now let us look at the other side of *righteousness*. This side deals with the fruit of our character as it relates to our actions, conduct and deeds. In the Bible the word *righteousness* many times is used to convey the idea of what is “right” versus what is “wrong.” Hence, the root word of *righteousness* is “right.” As free-will moral beings made in the image of God, we have the capacity to do righteous acts or unrighteous acts. Whichever act we choose to do is based entirely on our character and on our willingness to submit to the known will of God. For it is God who sets the standard by which we are even able to judge right from wrong.

Here is an illustration showing the difference between *legal righteousness* and *the character of righteousness*. Our legal righteousness is given to us the moment we are born again and it is a lot like receiving a new, white garment, “a robe of righteousness” signifying our *relationship* with God.

ISAIAH 61:10

10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

This *robe of righteousness* symbolizes our new life as members of God's family and gives us the right to call the Most High God, "Father." Wearing this robe signifies our place in the family of God and allows us to come into our Heavenly Father's presence completely justified with no sense of sin or guilt. This robe, when it is given to us, is wonderfully white and clean. In this illustration, the cleanliness of the robe signifies our *fellowship* with our Heavenly Father.

When we commit a dishonorable, unrighteous act and sin against our Heavenly Father, it is like throwing mud all over our white robe. This is equivalent to *breaking fellowship* with our Heavenly Father because we do not want to see Him when we look like a mess. Even though we are still wearing our *robe of legal righteousness*, which shows that we are children of the King, we look terrible and we feel dirty all over. We try to

scrub our robe but we quickly find out that no amount of scrubbing with righteous acts will remove the muddy stains of sin. We are told that the only cleaning agent that will remove the dirty stains and restore our *broken fellowship* with our Heavenly Father is professional strength TBJ (the blood of Jesus). We are given instructions to confess our sins and liberally apply TBJ to remove the horrid stains of sin. Once applied TBJ goes right to work, instantaneously restoring our *robe of righteousness* back to its original glistening, pure white. Now we are ready to go meet and *fellowship* with our Father once again.

1 JOHN 1:7

7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

REVELATION 1:5

5 ...To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.

Having a righteous character allows us to be in continual fellowship with our Heavenly Father. Honoring God's righteous standards will keep us in a place of fellowship and protection. But when

we do an unrighteous act it is like putting a big neon “OPEN FOR ATTACK” sign out for the devil to see, unlocking the door and inviting him in to steal and kill. But remember, if we do sin we know we have an Advocate with the Father.

1 JOHN 2:1

1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous [honorable].

When we confess our sins, Jesus, as our High Priest, Advocate, goes before our Father, the Judge, on our behalf pleading our case – and He has never lost a case yet.

1 JOHN 1:9

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

We must realize, once and for all, that we are children of the King and He has given us a robe of righteousness; so let us wear it with honor everywhere we go. But in order to develop a *righteous* character and lifestyle, then we need to learn to see ourselves the same way that God sees

us, washed in the blood of Jesus, spotless and clean.

Keep in mind that it takes time to develop character but until we are perfect, let us do the best that we know how to do by honoring the Lord every chance we get. We need to make the best effort we can to submit to God's ways of doing things until our outward life, lines up with our inward life. Ultimately, the key to developing our character will be realized when we begin to spend time with God and His Word regularly. We also need to remember that when we sin we only break *fellowship* not *relationship*. Sin never removes our robe of righteousness – it only gets it dirty. When we confess our sins we know that God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.

Completing the Image

Now that we have a basic foundational understanding of righteousness, I want us to take a closer look at righteousness as it relates to honor and some of God's other characteristics.

I like to think of righteousness and God's many other characteristics as pieces in a divine jigsaw puzzle. God's primary characteristics, which are *honor*, *love* and *glory* make up the edge pieces and all the other characteristics of God's nature fill in the rest of the puzzle revealing the complete image of Jesus Christ.

So it is with righteousness. Righteousness helps to fill in our understanding of honor. In fact, the more that I have studied the characteristics of God's nature. The more I have come to realize that they all work together as if they were one, infinitely interconnected with each other. At times, it is difficult to see where *honor* starts and righteousness ends or where goodness begins and *love* ends. Like a rainbow, with its prisms of

colors, God's characteristics seamlessly blend together perfectly.

I do not think that most of us can fathom the depths of what really happened at the moment we were born again. At that moment in time, the Spirit of God came into our spirits and the pure Zoë life of God exploded within our hearts. It helps to understand that the honor of God touches every area of the Zoë life of God, as *honor* is the life of God. If you are wondering what the Zoë life of God is, well, it is what makes God, God. Zoë is a Greek word that means the eternal life of God. It is His life-giving power. The Zoë life of God is *honor, love, and glory*. All the other characteristics of God, including righteousness, flow with and out of these three facets of God's nature.

Another way to envision righteousness and God's character attributes is to think of them as drops of water. Each drop can stand alone or you can combine many drops and make a river of water. Water can flow and take the shape of any vessel into which it is placed, yet you cannot tell where one drop begins and another ends. However, given enough time, you could still take a river of water apart one drop at a time. So whether we are talking about a single characteristic of God's nature (a

drop) or many characteristics of God working and flowing together (a river) we are still talking about the life of God – honor, love and glory and all the other characteristics of God’s nature (water).

When we were born again God poured His pure life of honor, love and glory into the vessel of our spirit. We need to recognize that God’s life is within us, become more sensitive to it and then let it flow out of us to impact the lives of a lost and dying world.

The following Scripture helps to show the correlation between the *life* of God and the *honor* of God.

DANIEL 12:2

2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life [honor], some to shame and everlasting contempt [dishonor].

Let us read this Scripture again. I exchanged the word “life” with the word *righteousness* and I exchanged the word “contempt” with the word “unrighteousness.”

DANIEL 12:2

2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting righteousness, some to shame and everlasting unrighteousness. (Author's Emphasis)

The word *righteousness* is not a synonym for the word “life.” However, I wanted us to see that *righteousness* or as I like to call it “right-ness” flows out of the life of God. That is why righteousness is a gift – because it comes from God. Hence, you cannot give what you do not already have yourself. God is right-ness personified.

PSALMS 119:142

142 Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your law is truth.

Remember some of the synonyms for the word *righteous*.

Righteous, Syn. just, upright, good, honorable, honest, worthy, guiltless, blameless, sinless.

Every one of the synonyms mentioned here perfectly describes characteristics of a righteous person. Yet I find it very interesting that each of

these words also describe the characteristics of honor. An honorable person is just, upright, good, honorable, honest, worthy, guiltless, blameless, and sinless in the eyes of God. Could this mean that righteousness and honor are the same spiritual concept?

When we look at the word “honest,” which is a derivative of the word “honor,” we can better understand the relationship between “honor” and “righteousness.”

Think for a moment. What does it mean to be honest? What are the characteristics of an honest person? One thing we know is that an honest person tells the truth, he does not lie. When I think of the word “truth” my mind quickly thinks of the word “true” which is a derivative of the word “truth.” When I think of the word “true” I also think of the word “false” as one might find when taking an exam. When an exam has been taken and then graded, we are usually told how many answers we got “right” and how many answers we got “wrong.”

My whole point is to show that the words *honor* and *honest* both carry with them the idea of what is “true” and “right.” The whole idea of “right-ness”

cannot be separated from the concept of honor. Hence an *honorable* person does things “right” because it is “right.” An *honest* person is right because he tells the truth. A *righteous* character produces a character of honor and an *honorable* character produces a righteous character.

Once we begin to grasp the divine connection between the different characteristics of God’s nature we begin to understand many of the concepts in the bible more clearly. For instance, we have discovered that one side of *righteousness* is a *legal status*, a free gift conferred upon us by God at the new birth. We could say the same thing about honor and even love. That is to say, that *honor* is a legal status, conferred upon us by God at the new birth. God now sees us honorable in His sight. We could also say that *love* is a *legal status*, conferred upon us by God at the new birth, as we are now His beloved children. And in the same way, God wants us to learn how to abide and reside in His love continually, by faith, until we become fully persuaded of the reality of His *love* for us and our new nature. This *legal status* is very similar to adoption, in that you may *love* and *honor* someone before you adopt them but the adoption adds a *legal status* to your love and honor. Once

adopted, a child then has all the same rights as any other member of the family.

JOHN 15:10

10 "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."

When it comes to walking in righteousness, as well as, honor and love, it helps to understand that we have a part and God has a part. We cannot do God's part and God will not do our part for us. God has declared us legally righteous, honorable and loved the moment we were born again – this is *His part*. He did this for the purpose of allowing us to become partakers of His divine nature. God did not declare us righteous, honorable and loved just so we can say we are born again and then go to heaven some day. Rather, God declared us righteous, honorable and loved because He wants us to become righteousness, honor and love personified just like Himself. There is a difference between *having* righteousness, honor and love versus righteousness, honor and love *having* and possessing us. These characteristics should possess us to the point that they begin to impact our lives and character, as well as, the lives of others around

us. God wants to possess our entire being with all of His character and nature, including His righteousness and honor, but we have a vital part to play if we are ever to see it come to pass.

MATTHEW 12:33

33 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.

To understand our part we must first remember that righteousness is like a two-sided coin, each side is different and distinct, conveying to us different aspects of righteousness. Yet both sides have a divine connection. I stated that one side of *righteousness* is a *legal status*, a free gift, conferred upon us by God at the new birth. Hence, we have been made righteous and honorable in His sight. This side of righteousness I like to compare to a man that was given a bag of seed as a gift. Though he possesses the seed and it legally belongs to him, all he has is a bag of dormant seeds. Seed in and of itself does not produce anything but once it is planted, watered and nurtured, something wonderful begins to happen. The seed begins to release the power and life within it, and, in time, it will bring forth fruit and reproduce itself. Yet, the only way to nurture the

seed that God has placed into our heart is to personally spend time with God and time in His Word. This is like the water and fertilizer the seed requires to properly grow. The more we continue to spend time renewing our mind to God's ways, the more developed our fruit will become. Once our fruit develops, it manifests through our character and good works, impacting the lives of others. This side of righteousness is the by-product or fruit produced from the root that was implanted in us as a seed of legal righteousness. This is the other side of righteousness, the side that impacts our *character* and *motives* – and this is *our part*.

MATTHEW 4:4

4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

Honor helps us to define and more clearly understand *righteousness* and, likewise, *righteousness* helps us to define and more clearly understand *honor*. Once we realize this fact, it will help us to unlock the meaning behind many Scriptures and understand them in a whole new light of revelation.

With that in mind, let us take a look at some Scriptures. Read the following Scriptures once omitting the word(s) in [brackets], then read them a second time changing the underlined word(s) to the word(s) that I added in the [brackets].

PROVERBS 11:6

6 The righteousness [honor] of the upright will deliver them, but the unfaithful will be caught by their lust.

I cannot speak for you, but when I substitute words like this, it seems to help my overall understanding and my ability to grasp what the Scripture is trying to teach. Now let us take a look at some more Scriptures. Remember, first read the Scripture by itself, then translate and meditate using the words I have placed in brackets.

This verse shows us that *honor* and *righteousness* will keep and protect us from trouble.

PROVERBS 13:6

6 Righteousness [honor] keeps him whose way is blameless, but wickedness overthrows the sinner.

In this verse we again see that *righteousness* and *honor* provide us supernatural protection.

ISAIAH 59:17

17 For He put on righteousness [honor] as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on His head; he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.

Even though the last Scripture is prophetically speaking of Jesus, if you have been born again now you are able to utilize the same armor that Jesus used when He walked the earth.

EPHESIANS 6:14

14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness [honor],

If there is any doubt as to the validity of my translation of *righteousness* to the word *honor*, then look at the next verse, which shows this breastplate being called “faith and love.”

Remember what I showed you about *love* and *honor*: translate and meditate.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:8

8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith [faithfulness] and love [honor], and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

When we rightly divide the Word of God it will always confirm itself and make sense. Years ago I wondered why the Apostle Paul referred to the breastplate as *righteousness* in Ephesians 6:14 but in 1 Thessalonians 5:8 he referred to the breastplate as *faith and love*. But now better understanding God's nature helped me to connect the dots. The nature of God is *honor, love and glory*, and out of God's nature flows *righteousness*.

Have you ever read the following verse?

ROMANS 13:10

10 Love [honor] does no wrong to anyone. That's why it fully satisfies all of God's requirements. It is the only law you need. (TLB)

Did you see that? Here God's Word shows us that *love* does no "wrong" to anyone, therefore *love* must only do "right" or what is "righteous."

Hence, we could also say that *righteousness* does no wrong to anyone. We could also say that *honor* does no wrong to anyone.

I hope you understand that maturing in *honor* and *righteousness* are important keys to successfully living in the kingdom of God!

MATTHEW 6:33

33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness [honor], and all these things shall be added to you."

Remember that our *legal righteousness* and our *legal honor* is a free gift from God and no amount of good works can ever earn or replace it. Once we are born again, our primary responsibility is to allow the Holy Spirit to develop a *character* of *righteousness* and *honor* in us to coincide with the *legal status* of *righteousness* that has been

conferred on us. But keep in mind that no amount of *righteous character* can ever take the place of the *legal righteousness* given to us from God. Once we receive the root of righteousness and keep it well tended, it will not take long to begin to see the fruit of righteousness.

PHILIPPIANS 3:9

9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness [honor], which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness [honor] which is from God by faith;

We need to receive the free gift of *righteousness* and *honor* that comes from God alone, and that will only happen when we simply believe what God has said and act on it.

ISAIAH 54:14

14 In righteousness [honor] you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you.

ISAIAH 54:17

17 No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness [honor] is from Me," says the LORD.

Do not forget that to truly *honor* the Lord with a righteous character, we have to learn to submit to God's Word and His way of doing things.

ROMANS 10:2-3

2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

3 For they being ignorant of God's [gift of] righteousness [honor], and seeking to establish their own righteousness [honor], have not submitted to the righteousness [honor] of God.

Honorable and righteous living is the fruit of being born again and it is the only evidence that separates the children of light from the children of darkness.

1 JOHN 3:10

10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness [honor] is not of God, nor is he who does not love [honor] his brother.

It helps to understand that when we were born again, we were given access to the kingdom of God. God gave us legal entry and conferred His righteousness upon us. But even though we have been given access to the kingdom, we still need to

learn how to live in the kingdom and that takes kingdom character. And when we develop a character of *honor* and *righteousness* for God and His ways, it will separate us from sin to a life of holiness.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:34

34 Awake to righteousness [honor], and do not sin...

There are a few things that I hope you will retain from this teaching.

First, that God has made you *legally righteous* through the blood of Jesus Christ. This is also known as right standing with God and this side of righteousness deals with *who* you are in Christ.

Secondly, I hope you will work with God and allow Him to develop the complete image of Jesus Christ in you, starting with a *righteous and honorable* character. This side of righteousness deals with what you *do* in Christ, the result of which will produce the fruit of holiness in your life. Do not confuse *who* you are in Christ with what your *do* as a Christian.

Thirdly, I hope that you have learned that there is a correlation between *honor* and *righteousness*.

When you read a Scripture with the words *right*, *righteous* or *righteousness*, I hope you will stop and take a second look – try translating it with the word *honor* substituted for these words and see what the Lord reveals to you. Likewise, you can do this same thing when you see the word *honor* or the word *love* – translate and meditate, giving God opportunity to further enlighten your understanding.

Furthermore, when studying this way to be careful NOT to change the overall context of the passage or Scripture. Honor God's Word and use wisdom when studying the Word to show yourself approved.

Would you like to know Jesus?

Read this page carefully, then pray.

ROMANS 10:9-11

9 If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." (NKJ)

Understand that salvation is not just reciting a prayer but salvation is opening your heart to Jesus and making Him Lord of your life.

Now pray: Jesus forgive me for my sins. I turn from my sins and I receive you, Jesus, as my Lord and Savior. I ask you to come into my heart and take control of my life. I believe you took my place and died for me on the cross and I believe that God raised you from the dead. I thank you for saving me and revealing yourself to me in a personal and intimate way. In Jesus name, amen.

Now do yourself a favor by contacting this ministry. We want to help you get started in the right direction.

About the Author

William A. Lee has been a Christian for nearly twenty years with a degree in Theological Studies. He completed courses in biblical studies at Crenshaw Christian Center's Ministry Training Institute and the International School of Ministry. He has taught on the life changing power of God's Word with revelation knowledge and insight to help bring believers up to higher levels of maturity and victory in Christ. William is a man with a message. Many years ago the Lord led him into an extensive study on the subject of honor and integrity. This study ultimately culminated in the writing of several books on the subject.

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